

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (Currently Amended) An apparatus comprising:
a file analyzer to perform a scan operation on an incoming file[[,]] to produce a scanning result, and to output the scanning result and the scanned file to accompany a digital signature chain;
a signature generator coupled to the file analyzer to receive both the scanning result and the scanned file and to produce a digital signature, ~~inclusive of the scanning result,~~ of the digital signature chain based on the scanning result and the scanned file, the digital signature chain is verified prior to accessing the incoming file and without the accompanying digital signature, access to the incoming file is precluded by the file analyzer; and
a time stamp indicator coupled to the signature generator, the time stamp indicator to provide information of the scan operation for insertion into the digital signature chain.
2. (Original) The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the incoming file is precluded from being opened if the verified digital signature chain indicates an unacceptable file integrity.
3. (Original) The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the incoming file is precluded from being executed if the verified digital signature chain indicates an unacceptable file integrity.
4. (Original) The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the incoming file is accessed if the verified digital signature chain indicates acceptable file integrity.
5. (Cancelled).
6. (Original) The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the apparatus is employed within a platform coupled to a local area network that a platform providing the incoming file is coupled to.

7. (Original) The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the apparatus is employed within a platform coupled to a wide area network.

8. (Cancelled).

9. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the platform further comprises a second control unit coupled to the first control unit both being integrated into a chipset, the second control unit including a token bus interface.

10. (Original) The apparatus of claim 9, wherein the platform further comprises a token bus coupled to the token bus interface and in communication with at least one token.

11. (Currently Amended) A method comprising:
sending a file to a signatory via a network, the signatory checking the file and providing a digital signature chain indicating file integrity of the file and timing information of the file checking operation as conducted by the signatory, the digital signature chain includes a digital signature produced by the signatory based on the file and a scanning result of the file, the scanning result indicating if the file has an acceptable file integrity;

verifying the digital signature chain returned from the signatory via the network prior to accessing the file, the verifying of the digital signature chain includes determining whether contents of a digital signature associated with the digital signature chain include a message regarding the integrity of the file; and

accessing the file if the verified digital signature chain indicates an acceptable file integrity.

12. (Original) The method of claim 11, wherein accessing the file comprises opening the file if the verified digital signature chain indicates the acceptable file integrity.

13. (Original) The method of claim 12, wherein accessing the file further comprises refusing to open the file if the verified digital signature chain indicates an unacceptable file integrity.

14. (Cancelled).
15. (Original) The method of claim 11, wherein the digital signature chain includes at least one digital signature and at least one certificate.
16. (Original) The method of claim 15, wherein verifying the digital signature chain includes accessing contents of the at least one certificate to determine if the signatory is authorized and accessing contents of the at least one digital signature to determine the integrity of the file.
17. (Original) The method of claim 11, wherein the network is a local area network (LAN).
18. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 11, wherein the timing information to identify a time that a scan operation is conducted when checking the file.
19. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 17 wherein the scanner is one of a virus detector, an intrusion detector, and a file integrity checker.
20. (Original) The method of claim 11 wherein the file contains at least one of a code and a data.
21. (Cancelled).
22. (Cancelled).
23. (Cancelled).
24. (New) An apparatus comprising:
a file analyzer to perform a scan operation on a file that produces a scanning result; and

a signature generator coupled to the file analyzer, the signature generator to produce a digital signature that is based on both the scanning result and the scanned file and is part of a digital signature chain, the digital signature chain being verified prior to accessing the file, and without the accompanying digital signature chain, access to the file is precluded by the file analyzer.

25. (New) The apparatus of claim 24, wherein the file is precluded from being opened if the verified digital signature chain indicates an unacceptable file integrity.

26. (New) The apparatus of claim 24, wherein the file is precluded from being executed if the verified digital signature chain indicates an unacceptable file integrity.

27. (New) The apparatus of claim 24, wherein the file is accessed if the verified digital signature chain indicates acceptable file integrity.

28. (New) The apparatus of claim 24 being a first platform controlled by a signatory and adapted to analyze the file prior to the file being opened by a second platform differing from the first platform.

29. (New) The apparatus of claim 24 being a first platform controlled by a signatory and adapted to analyze the file prior to the file being executed by a second platform differing from the first platform.

30. (New) The apparatus of claim 24 being the first platform in the same subnetwork as the second platform.

31. (New) The apparatus of claim 24 being the first platform in communication with the second platform over a wide area network (WAN).

32. (New) The apparatus of claim 24 further comprising:

a time stamp indicator coupled to the signature generator, the time stamp indicator to provide information of the scan operation for insertion into the digital signature chain.